

BILL # HB 2291

TITLE: chemical fire response; task force

SPONSOR: Landrum Taylor

STATUS: House Engrossed

PREPARED BY: Jeremy Olsen / Matt Busby

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Description

This bill requires the Arizona Emergency Response Commission within the Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA) to ensure that mandatory hazardous materials training programs for on-site command personnel address standardized protection of the public health during and after a chemical or other toxic fire event.

HB 2291 also includes coordination requirements associated with a chemical or toxic fire primarily between the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Arizona Poison Control System, and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to the extent that funding is available.

Finally, the bill establishes the Arizona Chemical Fire Response Coordination Task Force, consisting of members from each municipality in the state with a population of 75,000 persons or more. The Task Force would be required to establish a tracking program that identifies commercial and industrial buildings that have hazardous materials to ensure fire code compliance. The Task Force would also have reporting requirements.

Estimated Impact

JLBC Staff estimates a state impact between \$19,000 and \$180,000 from the Air Quality Fee Fund to DEQ based on the agency's estimate of increased responsibilities associated with this legislation. DEMA has indicated that there would be no cost in the agency's responsibility of overseeing training programs related to hazardous materials, as this oversight responsibility is already being undertaken by the agency. Other coordination activities delineated in the bill are presently performed by DHS and are funded utilizing approximately \$350,000 from existing other fund sources in the DHS budget. As a result, DHS estimates that the bill would not result in an additional cost to them.

Analysis

HB 2291 would mandate DHS to coordinate all public health and risk assessment issues associated with a chemical or other toxic fire event. DHS would also be required to consult with DEQ and the Arizona Poison Control system on the public health risks of exposure to a chemical fire and report on those potential public health risks to the public as soon as practicable after the event. This bill does not appropriate any additional funding to DHS for this purpose, but the agency currently receives funding from 2 sources for activities similar to those delineated in the bill: 1) \$100,000 annually from the Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund to conduct risk assessments on contaminated sites, and 2) \$253,000 from the Centers for Disease Control to conduct environmental health consultations and risk assessments for communities that are exposed to environmental hazards.

Under HB 2291, DEQ would be required to perform additional sampling in the event of a toxic fire and has estimated those costs to be \$180,000 annually. The department estimated the costs for a similar bill last year to be \$19,000. This year's estimate of \$180,000 includes \$65,100 for additional equipment, training, and lab services, while the remaining \$114,900 would fund 2 Environmental Engineer Specialist positions. The prior year estimate of \$19,000 was only for additional equipment and associated costs.

Local Government Impact

While cities affected by HB 2291 currently track hazardous materials as detailed in the bill, it is not known if a centralized database would be required so as to allow for information sharing or if the current structure would allow for the delivery of information.

The Arizona League of Cities and Towns has estimated limited impact as a result of HB 2291. According to the League, municipalities with populations over 75,000 are already performing functions specifically delineated in this bill. Limited costs may be borne by municipalities insofar as they are required to staff the Chemical Fire Response Coordination Task Force and prepare updates and reports.

3/20/06